

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Survey No. B-4767

1. Name

Historic 603 - 625 South Durham Street
and / common

2. Location

street & number 603 - 625 South Durham Street
city, town Baltimore
state & zip code Maryland 21231 county

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name
street & number telephone
city, town state & zip code

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Land Records liber
street & number Clarence Mitchell Courthouse folio
city, town Baltimore State Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title
date federal state county local
depository for survey records
city, town state & zip code

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7. Description

Condition		Check One	Check One
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	X original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	X altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved:
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date of move: _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The east side of the 600 block of S. Durham St. is composed of four different groupings of two-story, two-bay-wide brick houses dating from the 1820s to the 1880s. A number of the houses have been covered with formstone.

603 – 607 S. Durham St. are two story brick houses with the low-pitched gable roofs so characteristic of working class housing built in the 1850s and 1860s. This particular group is also quite typical of the ways in which the older rowhouses in Baltimore have been “improved” over the years, reflecting the different tastes of different owners. The houses are two stories in height, 12’ 1” and 12’ 8” wide, and occupy lots 66’ 6” deep. Each house has a one-story brick rear kitchen addition somewhat narrower than the house. The houses are constructed in common bond, and were always painted. A simple corbelled brick cornice runs across the façade. A double chimney located at the peak of the gable roof serves both the front and rear rooms. Each house also has a chimney at the rear of the kitchen addition. Door and window openings are surmounted by splayed brick lintels and have wood sills. The window openings are filled with 1/1 replacement sash. Doorways have single-light transoms and a variety of replacement door types. The houses sit on low basements, the entrances being reached by one or two wood, concrete, or brick steps.

The houses are two rooms deep, with the front room being entered directly from the front door. The front and back rooms of the first floor are separated by a wide opening, with the tightly winding, narrow stairs set in the rear room, in the space between the partition wall and the fireplace. The one-story rear addition served as the kitchen, with its own cooking fireplace. There are two bedrooms on the second floor of the main part of the house, each with a fireplace, and a single room in the dormer story.

Continuation sheet

609 S. Durham St. is a three-story, late-Italianate style house of the late 1880s. It is 15' wide and occupies a lot 69' deep. It is built in common bond and was always painted. The wooden cornice consists of a crown molding supported by three long, scroll-sawn brackets that connect to a lower molding strip and end with a distinct scroll pattern. The frieze area, which also serves as ventilation for the attic, is decorated with a scallop pattern, created with a jig saw. Door and window openings have segmentally arched brick lintels and plain tympanums; the sills are brick and all windows are filled with 1/1 sash. The single-light doorway transom is filled with stained glass, bearing the house number, and an original Arts-and-Crafts style door survives.

611 – 615 S. Durham St. is a group of three late Italianate-style houses built in the late 1880s. Two of the houses have been covered with formstone and in one, the cornice has been covered with aluminum siding. The houses are 12'3", 13', and 12'5" wide, respectively and occupy lots 66'6" deep. The wooden cornice consists of a crown molding supported by three long brackets, decorated with grooves, that connect to a lower molding strip and end with a distinct trefoil pattern, as well as a row of scroll-sawn modillions. Door and window openings have segmentally arched brick lintels and plain tympanums; the sills are brick and all windows are filled with 1/1 sash. Doorways have deep single-light transoms and an original Arts-and-Crafts-style door survives—at 613. The houses sit on low basements, each entrance being reached by one or two brick or concrete steps.

617 – 619 S. Durham St. are a pair of two-bay-wide, two-and-a-half story brick houses with dormer windows built in first two decades of the 19th century. The houses are 16' 8" wide and occupy lots 60' deep. Because early house lots in Baltimore were laid out back to back, without rear service alleys, the only entrance to the backyard is through the sallyport located in the center of the pair. The gable roof has a simple corbelled brick cornice. A double chimney located at the peak of the gable roof serves both the front and rear rooms. Each house also has a chimney at the rear of the kitchen addition. The houses are constructed in running bond and were always painted. Door and window openings are surmounted by splayed brick lintels and have brick sills. The window openings are filled with 1/1 replacement sash. Doorways have no transoms and a variety of replacement door types. The houses sit on low basements, the entrances being reached directly from the street or by one concrete step.

623 – 625 S. Durham St. are a pair of very small two-bay-wide, two-and-a-half story brick houses with the low-pitched gable roof so characteristic of the 1850s and 1860s. Each house is only 9'10" wide and occupies a 60' deep lot. The houses are constructed in running bond and were always painted. Door and window openings are surmounted by flat wood lintels and have wood sills. The window openings are filled with 1/1 replacement sash. Doorways have single-light transoms and replacement doors. The houses sit on low basements, the entrances being reached by one concrete step.

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8. Significance

Period	Area of significance	check one & justify			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theatre	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other: specify	

Specific dates c. 1810 - 1888

Builder/Architect

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The group of houses on the east side of the 600 block of S. Durham St. is significant in that it contains a group of houses dating to the period of Fells Point's importance as a maritime center in the first part of the nineteenth century, and also contains later, up-to-date infill houses dating from the later nineteenth century. It is also significant as representing a healthy city neighborhood that has been inhabited by people taking care of their homes for over one-hundred-and-seventy-five years, and like many neighborhoods of this type, most of the houses were covered with formstone in the 1950s and 1960s.

The houses were built according to a pattern that was quite common to the city's working class neighborhoods. Recognizing that workers held different levels of jobs (and pay), builders created a hierarchy of house sizes (and prices) in the new neighborhoods going up to serve the expanding factory districts ringing the harbor and northeast of the central city. Builders acquired anywhere from an eighth to a half of a city block and built 14' to 15'-wide two-story houses on the main streets, and smaller, 11' to 13'-wide two-story houses on the narrower streets bisecting the blocks. Typically, in this period, main street houses might sell for \$1,200 to \$1,500; small street houses for \$700 - \$900. Occasionally, the builder retained ownership of his small street houses to provide income for himself as rental properties, or sold them to other investors. In this way people of varying means could afford to live in the same block. If they couldn't afford the purchase price of the small street houses, then they *could* afford the \$8 or so a month it would cost to rent one, while they saved to be able to buy their own home later.

The two-and-a-half story houses were built at a time when Fells Point was already an important ship building center for the growing town of Baltimore. Early occupants included people involved in the maritime trades, small-scale craftsmen, and laborers who made their homes in the smaller scale and more affordable housing located on the small "alley" streets of Fells Point. Until about 1850 Durham Street was known as Happy Alley and its occupants were racially mixed. The late-Italianate-style houses were built in the 1880s to accommodate the growing labor force centered around the Fells Point waterfront and its growing businesses, like oyster and fruit packing companies.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Mary Ellen Hayward and Charles Belfoure, *The Baltimore Rowhouse*
(New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999)

10. Geographic Data

Acreage of nominated property

Quadrangle name

Verbal boundary description and justification

11. Form Prepared by

name / title Dr. Mary Ellen Hayward

Organization The Alley House Project

street & number 1306 Carrollton Ave.

city, town Baltimore

date

telephone

state & zip code Maryland 21204

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of property rights.

Return to:

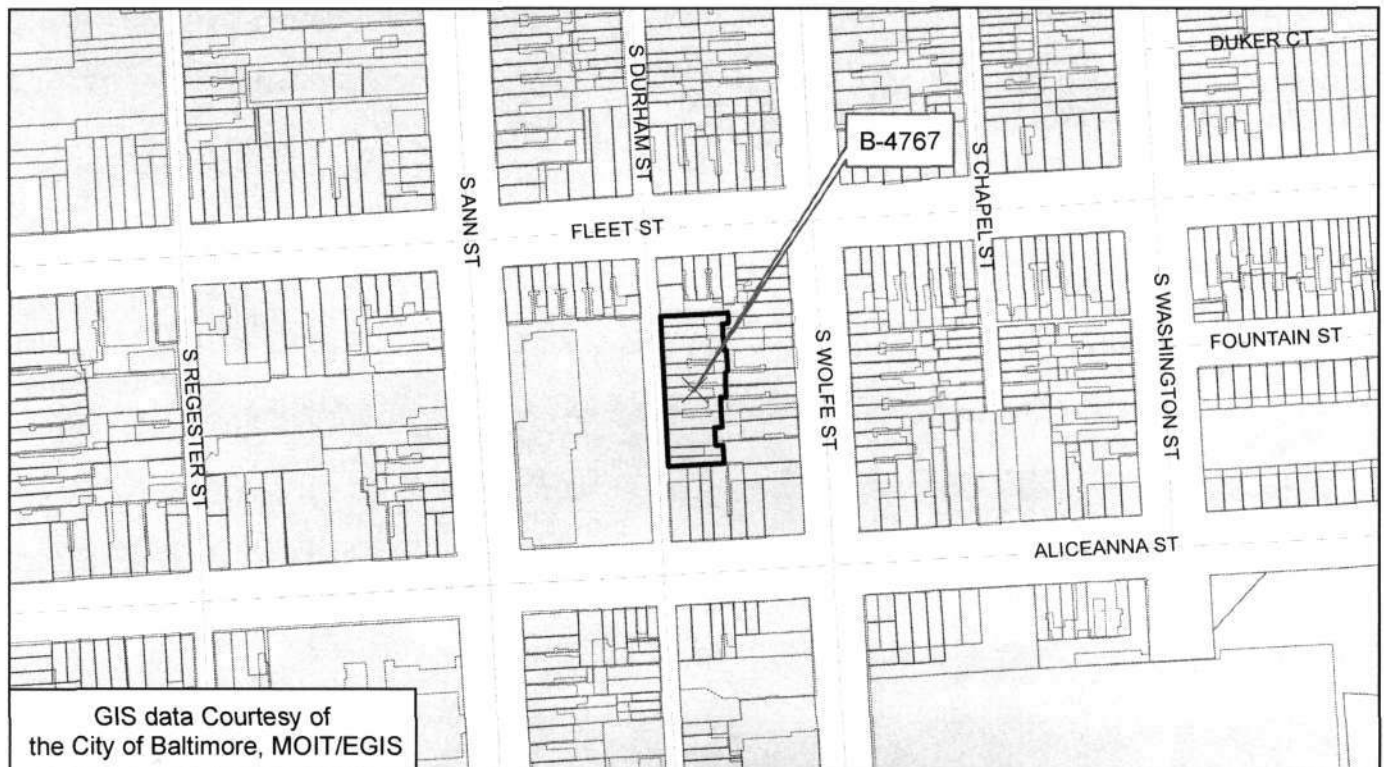
DHCP/DHCD

Maryland Historical Trust

100 Community Place

Crownsville MD 21032-2023

B-4767
603-625 S. Durham Street
Block 1829 Lots 052-063
Baltimore City
Baltimore East Quad.





603-607 S Durham
FPL

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603-625 S. Durham St.
BACTO. MD
C. Belfrage
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MD SHPO
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603 S Durham

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603 S Durham St.

BALTO. MD

C. Belfrage

12/47

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603-625 S. Durham St -

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603-625 S. Durham St.

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